

PROJECTED WORKS.—Advertisements have been issued for tenders, by 25th inst., for repairs and alterations of the church of St. Mary-at-Hill, Billingsgate; by 5th proximo, for the erection of a new workhouse at Canterbury; by 19th inst., for various works for the Birkbeck School at the London Mechanics' Institution; by 27th, for the erection of a parsonage-house at Appleby, Lincolnshire; by 17th, for the various works in the erection of a new union workhouse at the county prison, Oxford; by 19th inst., for the erection of a lock-up house at Alcester; by 24th, for taking down and re-erecting the South Stoneham Union Workhouse; by 26th, for the erection of wards to the Woburn Union Workhouse; by 18th, for the erection of a house and offices at Houghton (St. Neot's); by 15th, for the erection of a dwelling-house, &c., at Sheffield; and, by 2nd proximo, for the erection of the Hull baths and washhouses.

SYRACUSAN ARCHITECTURE.—At a meeting of the Royal Society of Literature on the 13th, a paper, by Colonel Leake, on Syracuse, was read, in the course of which he mentioned that the remains of Hellenic Syracuse are distinguishable from the Roman constructions by, among other circumstances, their larger scale; and he described the most important of the former, the Castle of Euryelus, now Mongibellisi, on the summit of Epipolæ. This ancient work is interesting as one of the best examples extant of a Greek citadel, and of the modes adopted by the Greeks for protecting the entrance of a great city. Next to the temple of Minerva, the finest relic of autonomous Syracuse is the theatre, erected probably about B.C. 480, in the reign of Hiero I., but, perhaps, afterwards enlarged to the dimensions indicated by its existing ruins, which prove it to have been not inferior in capacity to some of the largest theatres in Greece. In mentioning, among the most remarkable extant antiquities of Syracuse, the quarries, and particularly that called *Il orecchio Dionysio*, he pointed out the absurdity of the name, the excavation having no resemblance to a human ear. The principal monument of Roman Syracuse is the amphitheatre. In conclusion, it was remarked by Colonel Leake, that "the ruins and vestiges of Syracuse are monumental confirmations of the truth of history, as to its magnitude and importance; and may even justify the belief that Diodorus and Cicero have justly described it as the greatest of all the cities of Greece; for although Athens, including the Long Walls, had a greater periphery by about twenty-six stades, its superficial measurement was not so great as that of Syracuse."

EGYPTIAN ARCHITECTURE.—Miss Martineau, in her recent interesting work on "Eastern Life," has the following note on first seeing Luxor:—"I find here in my journal the remark which occurs oftener than any other—that no preconception can be formed of these places. I know that it is useless to repeat it here; for I meet everywhere at home people who think, as I did before I went, that between books, plates, and the stiff and peculiar character of Egyptian architecture and sculpture, Egyptian art may be almost as well known and conceived of in England as on the spot. I can only testify, without hope of being believed, that it is not so; that instead of ugliness I found beauty; instead of the grotesque, I found the solemn; and where I looked for rudeness, from the primitive character of art, I found the sense of the soul more effectually reached than by works which are the result of centuries of experience and experiment. The mystery of this fact sets one thinking, laboriously—I may say painfully. Egypt is not the country to go to for the recreation of travel. It is too suggestive and too confounding to be met but in the spirit of study. One's powers of observation sink under the perpetual exercise of thought; and the lightest-hearted voyager, who sets forth from Cairo eager for new scenes and days of frolic, comes back an antique, a citizen of the world of six thousand years ago, kindred with the mummy. Nothing but large knowledge and sound habits of thought can save him from returning perplexed and borne down—unless, indeed, it be ignorance and levity."

OAK AND LARCH.—No doubt many individuals, without ample experience with respect to the durability of oak and larch timber, commit errors by using oak instead of larch. I think there are but few of the pinus tribe the timber of which will not endure longer than the oak. I now write from experience. Some pine pits were erected here twenty years past; one with an oak sill the other with a deal one. The result is, the oak sill is quite decayed, while the deal would apparently wear out another of oak. Inferring from this, I shall not perhaps be accused of presumption in recommending the pinus order of plants to the attention of noblemen and gentlemen, as equal, and in some instances superior to the oak. Railway directors generally prefer these resinous woods. I am credibly informed, that on the London and North-Western line, where oak sleepers were used, they have been replaced with larch—making manifest at once the superiority of that wood to oak on the score of durability. For embellishing the interior of a mansion, the latter cannot be too earnestly recommended; handsome twisted grain bids defiance to any artist.

"Who can paint like nature—

Can imagination boast."

That larch and Scotch fir sooner produce timber fit for use than oak is not a question. Their upright habit of growth makes every part valuable. I have just been thinning plantations that have been planted twelve years, and I find that the larches would each make two excellent rails, whilst the oaks are no thicker than a waggon rope. Thou, brave old oak, must give way to larch for profit. We have some fine straight oaks here, which scarcely can be surpassed for size and straightness; no axe or hook has done this, but nature's own pruning, namely, thick planting.—*W. Brown, in Gardener's Chronicle.*

PICTURE GALLERIES should be the workman's paradise and garden of pleasure, to which he goes to refresh his eyes and heart with beautiful shapes and sweet colouring, when they are wearied with dull bricks and mortar, and the ugly colourless things which fill the workshop and the factory. For believe me, there is many a road into our hearts besides our ears and brains; many a sight, and sound, and scent, even, of which we have never thought at all, sinks into our memory, and helps to shape our characters; and thus children brought up among beautiful sights and sweet sounds will most likely shew the fruits of their nursing, by thoughtfulness, and affection, and nobleness of mind, even by the expression of the countenance. Those who live in towns should carefully remember this, for their own sakes, for their wives' sakes, for their children's sakes—*Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful.* Beauty is God's hand-writing—a way-side sacrament; welcome it in every fair face, every fair sky, every fair flower, and thank for it Him, the fountain of all loveliness, and drink it in, simply and earnestly, with all your eyes; it is a charmed draught, a cup of blessing. Therefore I said that picture galleries should be the townsman's paradise of refreshment. Of course, if he can get the real air, the real trees, even for an hour, let him take it, in God's name; but how many a man who cannot spare time for a daily country walk, may well slip into the National Gallery, or any other collection of pictures, for ten minutes. That garden, at least, flowers as gaily in winter as in summer. Those noble faces on the wall are never disfigured by grief or passion. It is delightful to watch in a picture gallery some street-boy enjoying himself; how first wonder creeps over his rough face, and then a sweeter, more earnest, awe-struck look, till his countenance seems to grow handsomer and nobler on the spot, and drink in and reflect unknowingly the beauty of the picture he is studying. See how some labourer's face will light up before the painting which tells him a noble story of by-gone days. And why? because he feels as if he himself had a share in the story at which he looks. They may be noble and glorious men who are painted there, but they are still men of like passions with himself, and his man's heart understands them and glories in them; and he begins, and rightly, to respect himself the more when he finds that he, too, has a fellow-feeling with noble men and noble deeds.—*Politics for the People.*

PICTURES BOUGHT BY THE ART-UNION OF LONDON.—The following is a list of the principal pictures purchased up to this date. By Mr. Meade, "The Broken Bridge," F. R. Lee, 150*l.*, from R. A.; Mrs. Hosking, "A Summer Afternoon on the Lido, near Venice," R. M'Innes, 100*l.*, R. A.; Mr. Varden, "Mill on the Ogivier, North Wales," F. R. Lee, 100*l.*, R. A.; Mr. Davis, "Setters on the Moors," T. Woodward, 80*l.*, B. I.; Mr. Field, "Meal Time," J. Bateman, 80*l.*, R. A.; Mr. Jones, "Dutch Yachting on the Zuyder Zee," E. W. Cooke, 80*l.*, R. A.; Rev. W. H. Vernon, "The Grecian Mother," W. Bowness, 80*l.*, R. A.; Mr. Allen, "Preparing for May-day," W. Gill, 63*l.*, S. B. A.; Mr. Brook, "Scotch Peasants Washing," &c., T. M. Richardson, W. C. S., 68*l.* 5*s.*; Mr. Burcham, "Shades of Evening," H. J. Boddington, 100*l.*, S. B. A.; Rev. W. Leigh, "A Scene from Peveril of the Peak," E. Corbould, 70*l.*, N. W. C. S.; Mr. Dennet, "Lake of Pergusa," A. J. Woolmer, 60*l.*, S. B. A.; Mr. Jewitt, "A Scene from Kenilworth," G. P. Manley, 52*l.* 10*s.*, Free Exhibition.

SALE OF THE BUCKINGHAM ESTATES.—On Wednesday a large portion of the Chandos and Buckingham estates, situate within the counties of Buckingham, Oxford, and Northampton, were sold by public auction by Alderman Farebrother, at Garraway's, Cornhill. The estate of Fimmore, Oxfordshire, upwards of 1,200 acres, the rental 1,226*l.* 14*s.* per annum, 3 miles from Buckingham and Brackley, 7 from Bicester, and 12 from Banbury, was put up at 35,000*l.*: the first offer was 24,000*l.*; it was knocked down at 31,300*l.* The Syresham, Falcott, and Astwell estate, Northamptonshire, comprising 2,000 acres, with a rental of 2,300*l.* (subject to an annuity of 500*l.* to the Hon. Lady Grenville, now in her 76th year), 5 miles from Towcester, 4 from Brackley, and 8 from Buckingham, was put up at 70,000*l.*: the first offer was 53,000*l.*; it was knocked down at 65,300*l.* The Hellesden estate, Buckinghamshire, 2 miles from Buckingham, 8 from Bicester, and 16 from Aylesbury, containing 2,890 acres, with a rent-roll of 4,763*l.* per annum, was put up at 150,000*l.*: the first offer was 97,000*l.*; it was knocked down at 130,500*l.* The Thornhill estate, in the borough of Buckingham, consisting of 440 acres, rental 665*l.*, sold for 82,500*l.* The Stockhill farm, 2 miles from Buckingham, consisting of 189 acres, sold for 8,300*l.*

BEXLEY AND CRAYFORD ATHENÆUM.—With all the revolutions and changes of states and empires, England stands as firm as ever; her arts and sciences, her manufacture and commerce, still proceed; her national, public and private buildings remain untouched monuments of reason and truth, and it gives us much pleasure to observe the increase of literary and scientific institutions, not in the metropolis and large towns only, but in small towns, and indeed in rural villages. A spirited tradesman at Bexley Heath, a village 12 miles from London, on the high road to Dover, is now erecting a large building, to be called as above, the Bexley and Crayford Athenæum, and we sincerely hope that he will meet with as much encouragement as his laudable undertaking deserves; and by the success that has attended the Dartford Literary Institute and the reading and lecture rooms at St. Mary Cray, both in the same locality, we doubt not but that he will have it. Bexley Heath, or Bexley New Town, less than half a century since, was dangerous to cross, except in broad daylight; and some of the old people around can tell of the dreadful occurrences that took place on "the heath" about the time that Lord Eardley's plate-chest was cut from the back of his carriage, when he was going on a visit to Belvidere House, Erith; but now it is a beautiful village, and being on a fine elevation, commands most delightful views around, with gentlemen's seats, shooting-boxes, streams for the lovers of Isaac Walton, and good shops. We view with pleasure the addition of the above building.

TITCHMARSH CHURCH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.—In reply to an inquiry, the drawing of this tower, which we engraved, was not made to scale, but by means of the *camera lucida*. Mr. Donaldson has kindly obtained for us the following dimensions:—The square of the tower externally is 28 feet; the total height to the summit of the pinnacle, 103 feet.